

birdwatching trek to the waterfall on August 28, 1999, Aasheesh Pittie sensed a movement among the trees growing from the valley on his left and on looking saw a small object floating towards the trunk of a tree. He wondered whether it was a flying lizard. The orange coloured patagium was seen clearly. Before he could focus his binoculars on it, the lizard merged into the bark of the tree. A few steps ahead, S. Balachandran pointed out a male draco *Draco dussumieri* Dum. & Bibr., on the vertical trunk of an unidentified tree (*Mangifera indica?*), that grew from the valley below. The lizard was displaying by erecting a bright yellow flap of skin from the region of its throat. But for this flash of brilliant colour, it would have been difficult to spot the draco against the bark of the tree, as its camouflage was perfect. We spotted two more lizards while we stood there. One was on another tree about 5 m away and the other was on the same tree as the first lizard. All three were at eye level and we had a good view of them. Three to four lizards were also seen next morning in the same area. They were photographed and videographed by other members of the group.

According to Daniel (1983) *Draco dussumieri* has a distribution that is "restricted

to southwest India from the hills near Kanyakumari to the forests of Goa...All other species of the genus *Draco* occur in the eastern Himalayas and further east." Though the lizard is listed in the publicity pamphlet on Sri Venkateshwara NP, brought out by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, this is the first documentation of its occurrence in the Eastern Ghats, an interesting record for biogeographers of the Oriental Region.

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November 4, 1999 S. BALACHANDRAN
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17. OCCURRENCE OF YELLOW-BELLIED *PELAMIS PLATURUS* (LINN.),
 REPTILIA : HYDROPHIDAE, IN COASTAL WATERS OFF DIGHA,
 WEST BENGAL

A specimen of the yellow-bellied sea snake *Pelamis platurus* (Linn.) of 235 mm total length was caught in a dragnet by fishermen off Digha, West Bengal, from the Bay of Bengal on September 12, 1998. Although this species is common in the Indo-Australian seas (Smith, 1943), there is no mention of this species in the account of Ahmed & Dasgupta (1992), who

listed the reptiles of West Bengal. A brief description of the specimen is given below:

Pelamis platurus (Linn.)
Anguis platurus Linn. 1766,
Syst. Nat. ed. 12, p. 391.

Material examined: New Digha Ghat, West Bengal, India; 12.ix.1998; coll. S. Mitra &

S. Ghosh, MARC. Regn. No. 86.

Diagnostic characters: Head narrow, snout elongated, body much compressed, tail laterally compressed, scales more or less hexagonal, 52 scale rows on thickest part of body, the lowermost rows with two small tubercles.

Colour: Blackish brown above, ventral portion bright yellow, a narrow yellow ring just below head, another two on body. Tail with 10 cream-white stripes.

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September 1, 1999

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SMITH, M.A. (1943): The Fauna of British India, Ceylon and Burma, including the whole of the Indo-Chinese region. Vol. III. Serpentes. Taylor and Francis. London. xii+583 pp. +1 map.

18. A RECORD AUDIO FEAT BY AN ANURAN

While staying in a sanitarium near Igatpuri (Nashik dist, Maharashtra), in the late summer of 1993, I came across an interesting, non-stop audio feat by a frog. Unfortunately at that time, I could not identify the species, for it was calling from the middle of a large, extensive waterlogged patch which was almost inaccessible. But in later years I came across similar feats, first in August 1998, in the Pune University Campus and secondly from an inundated ditch atop a hill near Pune in June 1999. In the second instance I was able to catch the frog and identified it as the colourful fungoid frog (*Rana malabarica* Bibr.)

In the case of the Igatpuri frog, I first heard its shrill call on the evening of June 6, 1993. The previous two days had experienced heavy rainfall. The frog started calling at about 1745 hrs on June 6, and kept on calling till the early hours of the next day. It apparently stopped calling at about 0730 hrs, when the first rays of the rising sun reached the spot where it sat. I carefully listened and monitored the call for the next three days and arrived at some statistics.

Every night the frog called continuously for almost 13 hours. The call can be transcribed as

Oo-wak-wak.....wak! The call always started with a short and quick *Oo* followed by quick-repeated *wak*. The sound *wak* was repeated from one to twenty-six times in one go (average=7). The interval between two successive call series was just one or two seconds. On an average, the *wak* call was repeated 102 times per minute during the evening and midnight hours and 83.42 times per minute during the morning hours (average=96). The total number of times the syllable *wak* was uttered throughout the night (about 13 hours) was calculated to be around 78,000. The small creature also kept on calling during the daytime, but intermittently. The estimated day call figure came to around 18,000. Adding this figure to the night figure, it can be plainly stated that the frog uttered the call *wak* 96,000 times in 24 hours!

Considering the small size of the animal, this was quite an extraordinary feat!

December 10, 1999 SANJEEV B. NALAVADE
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